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## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



### HINTS FOR THE DINNER TABLE.

By H. S. FLEMING.

WHEN we admit that we do not go to a dinner party solely because we are hungry, and that we depend chiefly for a good time upon what is offered to the ear and eye rather than to the palate, we have given sufficient reason for the decoration of our tables. The beauty of the table is the poetry which we offset to the deadly prose of the eating process. Of course if you dine with Mrs. Croesus you expect to see fifty-cents-a-piece roses and plenty of them, and they will probably be massed in a form or bowl in the centre of her ancestral (?) mahogany, looking very costly and handsome.

But Mrs. Expedient, whose little dinners are acknowledged to be strikingly successful, makes two or three yards of India or Marselline silk do duty for dozens of roses and finds her effect far more artistic. For instance, she gave a dinner a few nights since to eight friends. In the centre of the table she placed an earthen pot of low-growing ferns. Around the pot she massed a scarf of canary India silk, and scattered carelessly around the edges and up the slope of this soft mound were long stemmed yellow and purple pansies. With this centre decoration and four yellow shaded candelabra guarding the corners of the tables, the effect was harmonious and beautiful.

At another dinner she filled a cut glass pitcher with sweet stevia and a few bon buds, and tying two or three yards of pale pink Marselline silk through the pitcher's handle, let the ends drift along down the table.

At a luncheon for young girls, where she wished to give flowers to her guests, she tied up twelve bunches of daffodils, attached a yard of daffy ribbon to each bouquet, and massing the flowers in the centre of the table allowed a ribbon streamer to radiate to the plate of each guest—the places being indicated by the names painted across the end of the streamer.

Candles with colored shades are well nigh indispensable, or else a low-hanging central lamp, with a lace valance. All lamp shades now wear petticoats, and the softened light is becoming and at the same time grateful to the eye.

Fancy dishes of salted almonds and silver trays of bon bons provided with the dainty tongs now in vogue, prove themselves smiling oases in the desert of linen, and at a time when radishes are in season, a dish of these crisp ruby vegetables, with their coats peeled back like the petals of a flower, may prove a most attractive arrangement in green and red.

At a bridal dinner which Mrs. Expedient gave last winter

she allowed herself unusual extravagance in the matter of flowers, for bride roses she must have for a bride. Two dozen of these superb blossoms were in a globe of cut glass in the centre of the table, around this was a snow drift of white silk gauze, and edging this drift was a thick formal border of the feathery-looking stevia, which rested on another close border of maiden-hair fern. At each cover a few loose roses were scattered. Everything was green and white, the dinner service being plain white fluted china.

There are so many novel adjuncts to the modern dinner that one is puzzled to choose the most effective. The pretty little bread and butter plates which sit at each cover, and do so much for the preservation of immaculate linen, are usually a thing of beauty, especially when accompanied by the fancy knives which remain during the entire dinner. D'oylies are becoming the embodiment of refined taste and labor, and whether embroidered by the patient toil of the Orient or by the deft fingers of some American maiden, are almost too dainty to be breathed upon. Napkins should be so fine that they are creamy to the touch. And, by the way, neither Mrs. Croesus nor Mrs. Expedient now-a-days has one large letter embroidered on her napkins; for a later style is to write one's own initials in letters a half inch high across the corner of the linen and embroider them in over and over stitch, adding, if desired, a sprig of jasmine or forget-me-not underneath the three initials.

Ribbon is not invited to fashionable tables so often as formerly. Time was when every lady-finger and every piece of rolled bread had its waistband and bow of narrow ribbon, but these articles now appear unbelted in good society, and are not, apparently, the less cordially received. The great thing after all is to have the table pretty without being fussy. Let the linen be spotless, and never—no never, be tempted to desecrate its virgin whiteness with silk or plush that is not absolutely fresh.

Novelties in the viands may be introduced. Dishes made of pastry are pretty for certain entrées, and these dishes may also be made of macaroni boiled and then baked in a form. Strawberries are usually acceptable served with their rosettes on, accompanied by a little dish of powdered sugar. Ices may be served in the fruit and flower forms now so much affected, and a leaf of rose geranium in the finger-bowl is not amiss.

Do not let the novelties crowd each other in the courses; a little perspective adds to their effect. Parsley and sliced lemon are gay deceivers, and no amount of such "greenery gallery" humbug can hide the guilt of poor cooking. With badly prepared food your decoration is a mockery, but if your dinner is done to a turn and served hot, the men, at least, will forgive any ill feeling that may exist between the colors of the decoration. Happy is the hostess who compassing both these desired ends can yet keep her mind alert for the mental entertainment of her guests.



THE MAGNOLIA, BY HARRY A. DEANE.